THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) ONGC proposes to invest a sum of about Rs. 23,400 crores during the 9th Plan.

(b) The amount is proposed to be spent on survey, exploratory drilling, development drilling and production related schemes.

(c) A number of projects launched in the VIII Five Year Plan have been completed and some are in active stage of implementation.

(d) The projected oil production by ONGC duirng IX Plan period will be of the order of around 145 million tonnes.

Import of LPG

*96. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Enron have submitted any proposal for import of Liquified Natural Gas from Qatar and its sale in Gujarat; and

(b) if so, the details of the projects, and area to be catered thereby?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Development of Bio-Technology

*97. SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) the specific steps taken by the Government during the last three years for the development of biotechnology in the country;

(b) the achievements made in this regard during the above period and also during the current year so far; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government for development of bio-technology in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) to (c). During the last three years, concerted support has been provided for development of new areas of biotechnology covering transgenic research, seribiotechnolgy, human genetics, food biotechnology, development of diagnostic kits, setting up of a new Centre for DNA Finger Printing and Diagnostics, and expansion of the human resource development activity. A special effort has been made to develop biotechnology based programmes for SC/ST populations and in different States of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal, Haryana, etc. There have been many research leads available in terms of transgenic plants, diagnostic kits, and biofertilizers and biocontrol agents. More than 25 lakh plants raised from tissue culture are being planted in the field covering an area of 1080 ha. Tissue cultured cardamom has given 40% increase in the yield covering an area of 102 ha. Protocols for multiplication of economically important species have been perfected. Eight new biopesticide formulations have been developed and two pilot plants are producing biocontrol agents for the use by the farmers. For biofertilizers, 7000 experimental demostrations have been conducted and about 6000 farmers trained in the use of blue green algae and rhizobial technolgy. Probes for sexing of embryos have been tested with 100% accuracy. The leprosy vaccine is under Phase-III clinical trials with encouraging results. Liposomal intercalated amphotericin B has been successful in clearing systemic fungal infection. More than 10,000 scientists are using the bioinformatics network, set up by the department. More than 30 demostration projects have been given good results for the SC/ST population, benefitting about 15,000 target groups. Biodiversity conservation through molecular approaches has been successful in mangroves and in some parts of Rajasthan, and Gujarat. The gene banks for medicinal and aromatic plants have thousands of accessions and are also helping the farmers by providing high quality planting material of important species. Very close linkages have been established with state level institutions, universities, departments, voluntary agencies and other national laboratories.

The realise the full potential of biotechnology, a major thrust will be provided for bioproduct development, specially using the biological resources of the country. Mission mode programmes, research and development, and demonstration activities would be started in the: emerging area of genome mapping, transgenic research, combinatorial chemistry, drug designing and drug development, prospecting of biological resources, developing of diagnostics for new infections, genetic counselling, setting up of genetic enhancement centres and micropropagation parks, etc. The necessary biosafety guidelines have also been evolved. Human resource programme would be expanded in other regions of the country taking note of the location specific requirements and training needs.

Agency Administering Freehold Property

*98. SHRI RAMCHANDRA VEERAPPA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the names of agencies currently administering the conversion of leasehold properties in Delhi into freehold;